



Bright Light Foundation

AngieDore

2010 BLF Recipient



My name is Angie Dore', and on Dec. 1, 2009, I was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia (AML). In the months prior, I had grown increasingly fatigued, was experiencing anxiety attacks, had mild hair loss, and was easily bruised. These, in addition to some lesser symptoms, led me to believe that I was having issues with my thyroid.

I saw my regular doctor in hopes that he would refer me to an endocrinologist. He spent over an hour with me in his office, and when we were finished he ordered a blood test, an ultrasound of my thyroid, and an echocardiogram. I had the blood test that day and came back for the subsequent testing. I received a call from my doctor with the results from my blood work. As it turned out, my thyroid was fine, but my white cells were abnormally low. I was asked to repeat the blood work and after doing so, my doctor referred me to a hematologist. The day after Thanksgiving, I had my first of many bone marrow biopsies. Four days later, I received a call giving me the news that would forever change my life.

I was first seen at MD Anderson Cancer Center on Dec. 2, 2009. They did their own testing to confirm the diagnosis and I started my first round of chemotherapy on Dec. 7. The chemo for leukemia is meant to wipe the bone marrow clean from all cells – good and bad. The idea is for the bad cells to move out and the good to come back and take over. However, getting rid of the good cells means no immune system. While I was in the hospital for the first time, I

developed a dangerous infection in my stomach. I recovered and was released from the hospital on New Year's Eve. That would be the first of three infections that I would be hospitalized for.

The original goal of my oncologist was to give me around six treatments of chemotherapy consisting of three different drugs. One of the drugs was a research drug plus two additional. After the first round, my good cells rebounded very slowly. Where the average person can start the next dose within 28-30 days, I took around twice as long. My doctor started my next cycle with a lesser dose in hopes that I would rebound faster. Unfortunately, I did not recover any quicker, and after changing the chemo for the third and fourth time, we decided that a bone marrow transplant was necessary to give me the best chances of getting rid of it for good.

I should say that this has not come without many blessings. I was in remission after the first cycle of chemotherapy, and on Aug. 10, 2010, I received the wonderful gift of a bone marrow transplant. My donor is completely unknown to me, and yet she gave me a chance at a long life with my family. I have also met some wonderful people that will forever be dear to me. This has definitely been a long road. The last 10 months have drug by, and yet, seem like a blur. I have been hospitalized for three different infections, four of the five cycles of chemotherapy, and, of course, the transplant. Additionally, I have returned to the hospital for blood work and platelets every day for weeks at a time after each round of chemo. I know, however, that in the grand scheme of things, this is a short-term sacrifice for a long-term goal.

I continue to pray that I am cured of this disease and will be able to move on with my life with my wonderful husband and two beautiful boys. I have so much to live for, and look forward to doing just that. I am forever grateful to the doctors at MD Anderson, and to the selfless act of a perfect stranger. Of course, I would be nowhere if it weren't for our Lord, Jesus Christ. Through Him, all things are possible.